a manufacturing center.

Also of note in the post-war years was the break-up of the large plantations and rearrangement of farm land holdings. The rapid dismantling of the large farms and plantations was in part due to the changes in labor economics after the abolition of slavery. In 1850 there were 591 farms with an average of 280 acres of which 59 acres were in cultivation, by 1870 there were 1119 farms with cultivated acreage of less than 37 acres per farm. This tread continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, so that by 1900 there were 3234 farms listed, with an average of only 27 acres under cultivation.

In North Carolina the tenant system of farming, composed primarily of white share-croppers, developed as one of the more significant responses to the loss of capital and slave labor as well as the high price of land after the Civil War. By the end of the century owner-cultivated farms had decreased to 41% of all farms from a pre-war number of 55%. By 1910 owner cultivated farms had regained a slight majority of 52%. As farm tenancy increased during the second half of the nineteenth century, so did the reliance on tobacco. For all practical purposes the counties landlords and tenants functioned under a one-cash-crop policy. While economically profitable, this reliance on tobacco did not come without problems including depletion of the soil and dependance on a fluctuating tobacco market. Tobacco plots on most farms were small for several reasons, the first is that a small amount of tobacco acreage requires a lot of care and labor, which was often in short supply. Second, the ability to cure the tobacco was limited by the number of barns a farmer could build, fuel and operate, it was not easy to simply expand production by planting more land. Finally, the fact is that a small amount of tobacco acreage had the potential to produce enough income support a family. Therefore, it was possible that small farms, producing tobacco as a cash crop, could be practical and economically feasible.

The amount of farm acreage under cultivation is known as "improved" acreage. During the 1850's, improved farm acreage constituted around 20% of the total farm. By the turn of the next century the improved farm acreage had increased to about 30-35% of the total farm. The contrast in improved and unimproved farmlands reflects the rugged terrain in much of the county which discouraged large-scale farming and the difficulty of transporting products to market. Thus the landscape and historical records reflect small-scale subsistence farms, self sufficiency and relative isolation experienced by Stokes County residents.

The unimproved acreage many not have been cultivated, but that does not mean that it was unused. Logging both for timber and for firewood was a common use of wooded areas on most farms. A large amount of wood went into the production of fences, wooden buildings and plank roads and bridges. These wooden roads connected to the towns in surrounding counties. Industrial uses also required wood, mostly cut from the back lots of small farms. Timbering of all kinds was seen as a necessary way to produce income during periods of low prices for tobacco and other farm crops.

Iron ore deposits and limestone were both found in the county by early settlers. One of